Proximate Translation:

George Buchanan's *Baptistes,* Sophocles' *Antigone,* and Early Modern English Drama

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In recent discussions of the presence of Greek tragedy in early modern English drama, much emphasis has (quite rightly) been placed on the Latin and vernacular translations of the Greek plays that were circulated in published and manuscript form.[1] Plays written in English have, likewise, commanded some attention for the ways they have 'translated' the themes and stories articulated in Greek tragedies to a broader audience.[2] There has been less investigation into a third strand of dramatic production, the newly written Latin plays that were performed in schools, universities, and Inns of Court (performances that were sometimes open to the general public), and that were disseminated across Europe in manuscript and published form. This article takes up the question of what impact the 'ghosts' (to use Marvin Carlson's apt metaphor) of Greek tragedy had on the texts and performance of newly written Latin plays, and how, through these plays too, the ghostly outlines of Greek tragic figures were able to haunt the early modern English stage.[3]

Focusing on one play in particular, *Baptistes sive calumnia* (first printed 1577, but probably written between 1539 and 1543) by George Buchanan (1506-1582), it is possible to examine (and expand our understanding of) what might be 'translated' via neo-Latin drama. The fact that Buchanan also published two Latin translations of Greek tragedies, Euripides' *Medea* (1544) and *Alcestis* (1556), combined with his extensive experience of teaching Seneca and Terence, as well as other Latin authors, makes him an ideal focal point for a study of the cross-pollination of Greek, Roman, and neo-Latin drama. The Greek tragic elements found in Buchanan's other original drama, his *Jephthes* (1556), have been readily identified.[4] His first attempt at writing drama (something he is at pains to emphasize),[5] the *Baptistes* has been scrutinized more with respect to its biblical, Latin, and contemporary sources rather than any

Greek affinities.[6] In what follows we shall see how this original Latin drama is haunted by the dramatic structures and tragic characters of one specific ancient Greek play, Sophocles' *Antigone*. It will quickly become apparent how the figure of Antigone is significantly recast and reshaped in the course of her 'haunting' of Buchanan's biblical drama. The character of Antigone was often lauded in the sixteenth century for her piety and devotion. In his influential commentaries on Sophocles' Theban plays, Joachim Camerarius describes Antigone as 'magnanima' ('great-souled').[7] George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmersh's *Jocasta* (1566) presents Antigone as a dutiful daughter and sister. Robert Garnier's *Antigone ou La Pieté* (1580) declared its approbation for the heroine in its very title. In some circles, moreover, she was looked to as an admirable and instructive model for reformist, anti-papal, and anti-royal ethical action.[8] As evoked in *Baptistes,* however, Antigone is transformed by her surroundings. In Buchanan's play, she is framed as a hostage to her own private concerns, presented as dismissive of the impact her action may have on the state and, more surprisingly to our modern ears, as an advocate *for* tyranny.

It is this unusual interpretation of Sophocles' central figure that makes the *Baptistes* relevant to early modern English engagement with classical tragedy. In his survey of the early modern reception of the *Antigone,* Robert Miola notes that 'most early modern commentators and translators betray a deep unease with Sophocles' female hero'.[9] What Miola goes on to show, however, is that when authors do not explicitly approve of Antigone's action (which, as already noted, many actually do), they eschew explicit condemnation of the character, betraying their 'deep unease' by passing over the character of Antigone in relative silence and focusing instead on the figure of Creon. There is, in fact, only one exception in which 'unvoiced discontent turns to outright denunciation'.[10] This is Thomas Watson's Latin rendering of Sophocles' *Antigone* (1581), which was the first translation of a Greek tragedy published in England. In addition to the translation of the play itself, Watson provides four 'pomps' and

'themes', with one of each focused on the play's four central characters: Creon, Antigone, Haemon, and Ismene. It is in the second pomp and theme that Antigone is censured, at some length, for being led by 'fickle emotion' ('levis affectus', lines 147, 156), for violating public law ('ius publicum', 148), and for neglecting a duty to her homeland ('in patriam officium', 149), in favour of an undue focus on 'private ills' ('mala privata', 226) and 'private grief' ('dolor privatus', 235).[11] Buchanan's ghost of Antigone in *Baptistes* and Watson's negative framing of Sophocles' heroine cohere, and eerily so in light of the general trend for positive or at least ambivalent interpretations in the sixteenth century. In addition, then, to examining Buchanan's example of an original Latin drama that is freighted with Greek tragic ghosts, this essay invites some consideration of how neo-Latin plays might, in suggestive or subterranean ways, shape how the ancient Greek dramas themselves were read and interpreted in early modern England.

Since the allusions to Sophocles' *Antigone* in *Baptistes* seem to have escaped scholarly attention before now, it will be helpful to set out in some detail how Antigone 'haunts' Buchanan's biblical drama. Without a doubt, Buchanan, a Hellenist of renown, had read Sophocles' play in Greek. He may have also been steered towards this particular tragedy by Luigi Alamanni's popular Italian translation, which was published in Venice and Lyon in 1533. The *Antigone* was also a focus of vigorous discussion at Wittenberg between Camerarius, Philip Melanchthon, and Veit Winshemius.[12] A Latin translation of *Antigone* produced by Gentian Hervet (like Buchanan, at one point employed at the Collège de Guyenne in Bordeaux) was not published until 1541, but it is possible that a copy of this work was held by the Collège after Hervet's departure in the mid-1530s, and available for Buchanan to read when he arrived at the school in 1539. These works may have nudged Sophocles' *Antigone* to the top of Buchanan's reading list, but when we turn to the *Baptistes* itself, we see how the Scotsman diverges sharply from prior readings of the play and reveals a very different opinion of Antigone's character.

The *Baptistes* consists of a prologue and seven scenes, divided by six lyric choral odes. We begin with the fifth scene of play, in which the ghosts of Sophocles' *Antigone,* and of Antigone herself, are most readily identified.[13] John the Baptist, appearing for the last time on stage, is described as 'standing before the very doors of the prison' ('atque eccum ante ipsas carceris stantem fores', 999) from which prison, the audience know, he will not return alive. The waiting chorus of Judaeans, in distress and knowing what is to come, try to persuade him to change his position and to beg for the favour of Herod; the Baptist eloquently justifies his stance, first in dialogue with the attentive chorus, and then in a speech of some length, before departing the scene (1104).

We have an early signal that this episode is evoking something Greek. The chorus in Greek tragedies have a habit of speaking a few lines to approaching figures at the beginning of the scene, or a few lines of farewell at its close - a feature closely connected to the exigencies of making an entrance or exit in their large, outdoor theatre spaces. In contrast to the sudden, more Senecan appearance of the chorus to sing their lyric odes, seen earlier in the *Baptistes* (lines 281, 573, 833, and 966), we have a thoroughly Greek choral introduction to the scene, with the chorus shifting metre after they have finished the fourth choral ode (967-96) and greeting the prophet as he enters in iambic trimeter (997-1007). At the end of the scene, the chorus say their farewell in iambic trimeter (1105-9) as, we must imagine, the Baptist exits, before moving back into lyric and their next ode (1110-65).

Moreover, the pattern of action within the scene is strikingly similar to a scene in Sophocles (coincidentally, also the fifth in that play) when Antigone appears for the last time on stage and is described as 'passing to the chamber where all come to rest' (804-5). There, the waiting chorus of Thebans, distressed and weeping at Antigone's fate, try to moderate and contextualize her grief, but Antigone only continues to justify her position (and her resolute anger) before exiting (943). Such coincidence of action - a lone individual, facing an imminent

execution at the hands of their country's ruler, in conversation with a sympathetic group (but one that, nevertheless, attempts to moderate that individual's staunch position), forms a foundation for further points of contact regarding the ethical questions posed and the imagery deployed in both plays.

For the moment, we might see the Baptist and Antigone as occupying similar dramatic positions. And, indeed, the Baptist only strengthens this apparent identification with Antigone when he frames the dilemma before him as a stark choice between two powers:

> Quid igitur mihi auctores? duo
> reges utrimque facere pugnantia iubent.
> caelestis alter, misericors clemens bonus;
> terrenus alter, impotens ferox malus.
> mortem minatur alter; alter me vetat
> mortem timere, pollicetur praemium
> vim non timenti. corpus alter perdere
> potest; at alter corpus una et spiritum
> torquere flamma poterit inevitabili.
> hi cum repugnent, consule utri paream.
>
> (1024-33)

(What advice do you give me then? Two kings, one on each side, bid me do opposing things. The one is in heaven, and is merciful, kind, good; the other is earthly, and is uncontrolled, fierce, evil. On threatens death, the other forbids me fear death and promises a reward if I do not fear violence. One can destroy my body, but the other

will be able to torture body and spirit in flames unavoidable. Since they are opposed to each other, advise me which I should obey.)

In her central argument with Creon earlier in the play, Antigone powerfully articulates her own dilemma in a similarly oppositional way: '[and I did not] think your proclamations strong enough to have power to overrule, mortal as they were, the unwritten and unfailing ordinances of the gods. For these have life, not simply today and yesterday, but for ever, and no one knows how long ago they were revealed' (453-7). Her claim to abide by a higher divine power and by its everlasting laws finds an analogue in the Baptist's depiction of the king in heaven as opposed to on earth (emphatically emphasized in Buchanan's poetry - 'caelestis alter ... terrenus alter') and in his evocation of the eternal consequences - the 'flamma inevitabili' - of his failure to abide by the strictures of that higher power. John the Baptist has earlier sought to distinguish between mortal and divine regents, refusing to discount the power of God when faced with 'earthly kingdoms' and their kings (504-15), and his image of 'two kings, one on each side' summons those earlier arguments, too. Although the details differ slightly to those laid out by Antigone (the greater authority of God in heaven as opposed to mortal rulers would have been less clear-cut under the Roman Catholic - and Anglican - churches), the resonances between the two figures are clear.

The imagery of light and dark, freedom and prison, and the role of friends and children in these figures' lives also provide further points of contact between John the Baptist and Antigone in this scene. Her very first words (sung in lyric verse) to the chorus are: 'Behold me, citizens of my native land, as I make my last journey, and look on the light of the sun for the last time' (806-10). The connection between having sight of the sun, and life, although not uncommon, is significant for Antigone, and she returns to the image once more at the very end of her lyric exchange with the chorus: 'No longer may I, poor creature, look upon the sacred

eye of the shining sun' (879-80). In contrast much time is spent emphasizing the place of darkness, the cave in which she is to be left to die, her living grave. She sees before her the 'heaped-up mound of my strange tomb' ('ἕρμα τυμβόχωστον ... τάφου ποταινίου', 848-9). Creon adds oppressive detail to the picture, calling on the guards to 'enclose her in the encompassing tomb' ('κατηρεφεῖ τύμβῳ περιπτύξαντες', 885-6) and for Antigone to be left 'entombed while yet living' ('ζῶσα τυμβεύειν', 888). Antigone again calls on her 'tomb', her 'deep-dug home' ('ὦ τύμβος ... ὦ κατασκαφὴς οἴκησις', 891-2), and her arrival while still living at the 'caverns of the dead' ('ζῶσ’ ἐς θανόντων ἔρχομαι κατασκαφάς', 920). Finally, Antigone repeatedly laments her status as 'friendless’, 'unwept' and 'childless': 'φίλων ἄκλαυτος' ('unwept by friends', 847), 'ἄκλαυτος, ἄφιλος ... τὸν δ’ἐμὸν πότμον ἀδάκρυτον | οὐδεὶς φίλων στενάζει' ('unwept, friendless ... my fate, unwept for, is lamented by no friend', 876-882), 'μέρος λαχοῦσαν οὔτε παιδείου τροφῆς |... ἐρῆμος πρὸς φίλων' ('and having no share in child-rearing ... deserted by my friends', 918-19).

The Baptist's journey, from his last look on the light of the sun to the darkness of his prison cell, could have been similar, and at first the two rebels seem to be walking the same path. He declares 'quem deus lucis mihi concessit usum, reddo repetenti libens' ('the enjoyment of the light which God granted me I gladly return to him at his request', 1045-6, and also at 1053-5). However, while maintaining the prominence of the image of light throughout this scene, the Baptist distances himself from the ghost of Antigone hovering nearby and, inverting her imagery, emphasizes how the true light and sun is to be found in the afterlife, not the world of mortals. Death is a gate 'splendidam ad lucis domum' ('to the shining house of enduring light', 1060). For him, it is the most natural thing to long to see 'rerum ad parentem lucis aeternae incolam, quem contueri est vita, mors non cernere' ('the father of the world who dwells in eternal light; for to gaze on him is life, and not to see him is death', 1085-6). John the Baptist, like Antigone, also speaks about his 'prison', a structure easily imagined as represented on

stage. Unlike Antigone, he emphasizes that 'prison' is where he *currently* exists and his journey to death constitutes a release from the prison that is his body: 'de carcere hic est exitus mortaliabus | et ad carentem morte vitam transitus' ('this is man's departure from prison, and the passage to a life without death', 1062-3). And again, 'ergo recluso corporis de carcere, | eo evolare spiritus liber cupit | quo cunctus ibit orbis serius ocius. | nam longa vita nil, opinor, aliud est | quam lenta duro servitus in carcere' ('So my spirit is eager to fly free from the unbarred prison of the body to where the whole world will sooner or later pass. In my view a long life is nothing but lingering slavery in a grim prison', 1093-7).[14] And, lastly, in a brief exchange with the chorus, we are told that, far from being 'friendless', 'childless', and 'unwept for', the Baptist is surrounded by friends and children who will weep for him in death:

> CHORUS. Itane relinquis orphanos parens tuos?
>
> IOANNES. Nunquam orphanus erit qui deum credit patrem.
>
> CHO. Nil te propinqui, nil amicorum movent
>
> lacrimae, impotenti quos tyranno deseris?
>
> IO. Non desero, sed potius ab eis deseror.
>
> (1047-51)

> (CHORUS. Are you a father, leaving your children orphaned in this way?
>
> JOHN. One who believes that God is his father will never be orphaned.
>
> CHO. Are you not influenced by your relatives or the tears of your friends, whom you are abandoning to an uncontrolled tyrant?'
>
> JO. I am not abandoning them, but rather being abandoned by them.)

Both John the Baptist and Antigone may claim to have been 'abandoned' by their friends, but the somewhat curious emphasis of these few lines, which stress that the prophet does, in fact, have friends and children near at hand, makes up yet another inversion of Antigone's character and situation as they are found in Sophocles' scene. It should be emphasized that none of the imagery of light, death, prisons, and loved ones deployed in this scene is particularly unusual, and the Sophoclean text is clearly not acting as 'inspiration' for Buchanan in writing this scene. In a much more interesting way, I argue, these points of contact in the patterns of action and imagery work to summon Antigone's ghost. Not only this, but if we might identify John the Baptist with Antigone (most clearly via the coincident pattern of action, but also by noticing how key images are inverted by the Baptist) we are also encouraged to see Buchanan's hero as an *anti*-Antigone. Rather than mimicking Antigone's mourning for her loss of life, and her grieving for the mortal experiences missed as she enters her 'living tomb', the prophet knows that true life, an everlasting life, lies beyond death, and he gladly leaves behind the trappings of his body, a literal living prison. This is also something more than just a 'Christianization' of a pagan text, or the demonstration of superior eschatological understanding. When we compare other parts of the play that are 'translated' from *Antigone* to *Baptistes,* we see how Buchanan places a yet more deliberately negative frame around the ghostly vision of this tragic heroine.

At the outset of both plays, we find a further set of intriguing coincidences. In the world of both dramas, one conflict has come to an end and a new threat comes into view. In Sophocles' play, Antigone and Ismene meet in secret to discuss the recent decree forbidding the burial of their brother. Antigone says to her sister, 'There is nothing painful or laden with destruction or shameful or dishonouring among your sorrows and mine that I have not witnessed. And now what is this proclamation that they say the general has lately made to the whole city?' (4-8). In *Baptistes,* after an extra-dramatic prologue (Terentian in style and posture) the priest Malchus reminds his interlocutor Gamaliel of their country's recent struggles and how 'we had scarcely

begun to raise our heads from the weariness of our wretched state when sudden sacrilege arose from a quarter where fear or no ill threatened' (76-9). Such a set-up is dramatically potent but not, in and of itself, remarkable. However, the two pairs of interlocutors in both scenes *are* conveniently similar. Antigone and Malchus are both shown as reckless in their desires and in their longing for action: Ismene calls Antigone 'reckless one' (47), 'in love with the impossible' (90), and 'foolish' (99), while Antigone herself asks 'let me and my rashness suffer this awful thing!' (95-6); according to Gamaliel, Malchus is 'obstinatus' ('obstinate', 204), 'ira incensus et fastu tumens' ('fired with anger and swollen with pride', 221), and 'nullius ille nunc memor modestiae' ('without thought of any moderation', 240). Antigone and Malchus both refuse to keep silent (*Antigone*, 84-7, *Baptistes*, 161-3). Both are greatly invested in their ancestry and its associated responsibilities: Antigone says to Ismene, 'You will soon show whether your nature is noble or you are the cowardly descendant of valiant ancestors' (37-8); Malchus chastises Gamaliel, 'tuis maioribus | indigna facias' ('you act in a manner unworthy of your forbears', 162-3) and grumbles that they would behave differently 'si quid paterni spiritus nobis foret' ('if we had any of our fathers' spirit in us', 178). Opposite these two impassioned actors are set a pair of figures that advocate for moderation. Ismene is pragmatic (if not particularly heroic) in recognizing the ethics of the day - 'We must remember that we are women, who cannot fight against men, and then that we are ruled by those whose power is greater ... there is no sense in actions that exceed our powers' (61-8) - and asks Antigone to at least keep silent about her intentions (84). Gamaliel counsels, 'professionem nil temere nostram decet | statuere' ('it befits our vocation to decide nothing rashly', 109-10) and is left to complain, 'modestius | se noster utinam gereret ordo et cautius!' ('if only our order would show a more moderate and careful attitude!', 266-7) once Malchus has left the stage.

The fact that Gamaliel appears only in this scene in the *Baptistes* suggests some deliberate goal on Buchanan's part in setting up his first scene as a dialogue between the

reckless firebrand and a moderating force.[15] It may be worth underlining that this is different to the common scene-type in Seneca where an attempt is made to manage the rashness of an impassioned central figure by their nurse; here the interlocutors of both plays have an equal stake in the matter at hand but, nevertheless, take opposing views. If Gamaliel is introduced to act as an interactive analogue to Sophocles' Ismene, it follows that Malchus, then, is meant to summon the ghost of Antigone. This association of Antigone with Malchus, Ismene with Gamaliel, pushes us some way past the connections and inversions we noted in Scene 5. John the Baptist is not just an anti-Antigone; Antigone's ghost is haunting the stage in the figure of Malchus, and their combined characters become not just antithetical to the Baptist, but acutely inimical.

The notion of an unusual and perhaps even troubling Antigonal presence haunting Buchanan's drama gains in potency when we consider one further scene in the *Baptistes* that interacts with the form and content of Sophocles' play. In the sixth scene of Buchanan's play there is a rapid exchange of thirty-two lines (1184-1216) between Herod and his stepdaughter (also his half-niece), called only 'Puella' in Buchanan's text. In the course of these lines, the King assures his young interlocutor that she may have any favour from him but, when the scandalous request for the Baptist's head is made, he resists and the pair move quickly, and rather surprisingly, into a discussion of tyranny and kingship. A remarkably similar pattern of action, spread out across a much longer scene, can be found in the confrontation in *Antigone* between Creon and his son Haemon (631-765). There, after an initially warm exchange where reassurances of support are given, a controversial request is made (for Creon to reverse his position on punishing both Antigone and her dead brother), but is strenuously resisted, leading to a discussion of a ruler's authority and the proper place of public opinion in shaping that ruler's judgement and action. In both scenes, the youth of one interlocutor is emphasized, not only by the parental or quasi-parental role of the other, but also in the elders' shock at the

boldness of both requests. Creon finds Haemon's challenge to his decree intolerable, scoffing 'so men of my age are to be taught sense by a man of your age?' (726-7). Herod, meanwhile, is appalled, and states 'donum virgini indecens petis' ('you beg a gift unfitting for a maiden', 1198).

However, the surface parallels between Creon and Herod, Haemon and the girl are only part of the story in this crucial and climactic scene. In *Antigone,* Creon, already in a position of power, questions his son, defending a king's right to autonomy in terms of how and what he rules: 'Is the city to tell me what orders I shall give? ... Must I rule this land for another and not for myself? ... Is not the city thought to belong to its ruler?' (734-8). In the *Baptistes*, however, it is not Herod, Creon's counterpart in that play, who advocates for the absolute autonomy of the ruler, but Puella. She declares 'parere populi est, imperare regium ... quod iniquum erat | prius, imperando facere rex aequum potest ... modum | non regibus lex, legibus sed rex facit ('the people's role is to obey, the king's to command ... The king by his command can make just what was earlier unjust ... the law does not limit kings, but the king the laws', 1203-8). She even gives a paraphrase of a statement beloved by famous tyrants of old, 'Necesse reges est timeri, diligi | necesse nonest' ('kings must be feared; they need not be loved', 1214-15). Meanwhile, Herod is keen to distance himself from tyranny, fearing that 'Pro rege fama me tyrannum perferet' ('rumour will brand me as a tyrant, not as king', 1209).

Although the direct analogue for the Puella in Sophocles' play is Haemon, the ghost of Antigone herself is once more clearly in the foreground during the scene. The gender of the Puella and her relationship to Herod (half-niece) establish an initial comparison. The way that Haemon is closely allied to Antigone's cause in Sophocles' play, too, allows them to occupy a shared space within the figure of the Puella. The distinction between male and female 'virgo' is also blurred. We can note that Haemon is repeatedly feminized by Creon in their argument, with the father accusing his son of being 'on the woman's side' (740), then 'inferior to a woman'

(746), speaking on behalf of a woman (748), and 'slave to a woman' (756) because of his defence of Antigone's position. The connection between Haemon and Antigone is emphasized elsewhere in Sophocles' play by Creon and the chorus of Thebans, both of whom attribute Haemon's staunch defence of Antigone to his being in love with her (748, 781-800).

Just as important a connection between characters exists in the *Baptistes* between the Puella and the Queen. In addition to their assumed collusion as mother and daughter, the young girl echoes sentiments already voiced earlier in the play by the Queen. Just as the Puella warns 'in rege vulgo lenitas contemnitur' ('leniency in a king is despised by the common folk', 1216) so the Queen has also warned 'cave lenitatis falsa species... quae videtur lenitas propius tuenti summa erit crudelitas' ('Beware the false appearance of leniency ... what seems leniency will on closer inspection be the greatest cruelty', 381-2) She seeks to provoke her husband by reference to the Baptist, insisting on the absolute power of the king, by asking him, 'iam sceptris modum | hic faciet? huius renum habendum arbitrio est? ('Will this man now impose limits on the royal sceptre? Is the kingship to be maintained at his discretion?', 399-400), a remarkable echo of Creon's own claims for absolute rule: 'Is the city to tell me what orders I shall give? ... Must I rule this land for another and not myself?' (734-6). The close association of Creon's sentiments, the arguments set out by the Puella, and the Queen's longer speeches draw these characters into a pointed alliance against the ambivalent Herod.

These connections and resonances allow for a particularly rich array of ghosts to be present in this climactic scene of Buchanan's drama. Marshalled against the Baptist, God's true prophet on earth, are a series of figures driven by private concerns - a loss of priestly power in the case of Malchus, an accusation of an unchaste marriage in the case of the Queen. They are joined by the ghosts of a love-driven Haemon (summoned by the structural similarities in patters of action in the scene), and his headstrong fiancée Antigone (summoned by the comparable figure of the young, unmarried niece of the king, Puella) hovering close by. The

connections made here between pagan and the Old Testament worlds, skilfully distilled in the single figure of the Puella, deepen and enrich the contrast with the Baptist's behaviour and action, as well as heightening our justified approval of the divine prophet. Placed at the centre of this battle, the ghost of Antigone is aligned with every negative, self-interested figure that has appeared on stage. She has been costumed by Buchanan in the most reprehensible garb through her affiliations and assimilations with Malchus, the Queen, and the Puella. Here Antigone loses any pious lustre and is transformed by association into a self-seeking and dangerous advocate for tyranny. Correspondences or coincidences of scenic structure, the pattern of action, the imagery used, and the politics and ethics discussed first summon this particular Greek tragedy to mind. But from there, the *Baptistes* rejects, inverts, and stretches the Greek material, allowing Buchanan's characters to raise other questions or to enrich and complicate the audience's experience of reading or seeing the play.

Was it this tragedy that encouraged Watson to frame Antigone in an equally negative way in his own treatment of Sophocles' play? We should be cautious about positing any firm connection between the two plays. There are no obvious textual echoes between the two works. Further, it would not have seemed especially strange for Watson (or indeed, Buchanan) to display a suspicion of any female member of a royal family intent on their own course of action. In England, certainly, the spectre of Mary Tudor's tumultuous reign would encourage unease about any female figure rejecting law in favour of older 'ancestral' religious custom. Mary Queen of Scots, too, imprisoned but still alive in the early 1580s, had already been cast negatively as a 'Medea' and a 'Clytemnestra' by certain anti-Marian writers (including Buchanan).[16] The ongoing menace of her presence would have kept that same mistrust of rebel royal women, even (or, perhaps, especially) when they are imprisoned, sharp for many English readers.

Watson's particular circumstances may well have guided him in his critique of Antigone's actions. As noted by Dana F. Sutton, it was the Catholic view that 'the Faithful had the right, indeed the obligation, to rebel against heretical sovereigns' and so Watson's criticism of Antigone's pursuit of her own religious principles in the face of public decree 'would have been congenial to official Anglican and governmental views'.[17] Likewise his training as a jurist fits with the spirited defence of the ultimate authority of a nation's laws - 'spernere nulli licet impune' ('nobody may hold the laws in contempt with impunity', Second Theme, line 221).

All that being said, the resemblance between Buchanan's Antigone, who lies behind Malchus, the Queen, and the Puella, and Watson's characterization of Antigone as overly driven by emotion, focused on private concerns, and a danger to the stability of the state under monarchy, is very suggestive. It is certainly a striking coincidence that these two explicitly negative visions of Antigone appeared in press within four years of each other. Buchanan's play had been written in the late 1530s or early 1540s for performance by the pupils (Michel Montaigne among them) at the Collège de Guyenne in Bordeaux. After over thirty years and a limited circulation in manuscript,[18] the play was ushered through the London press of Thomas Vautrollier by his friend Thomas Randolph in 1577. The text of Watson's play, meanwhile, was published by John Wolfe, also in London, in 1581.

Watson's connection to Francis Walsingham, whom he met while the latter was in Paris in the 1570s and with whom he built a close friendship, could have brought him into contact with Buchanan's works.[19] We know very little about how Thomas Watson spent his time during his short sojourn in Paris between October 1576 and 1577, but it is likely that here too he might have been steered towards Buchanan and his works if he attended lectures at the university. And while Watson most certainly read existing Latin translations of Sophocles' *Antigone* as he himself prepared to enter the competitive field of translation,[20] it is possible that he also looked to original Latin plays, such as Buchanan's, as models. We can note that Buchanan was unusual

in his facility with translating Greek metres into Latin, and Watson's own interest in translating metre and music for English audiences makes Buchanan an attractive object for his *aemulatio*.

Buchanan's reputation among English writers, and the admiration his writing attracted, also suggest his text as a dynamic interlocutor with Watson's. Buchanan was, and had been for some years, highly esteemed in England as a poet, dramatist, and thinker.[21] As has been demonstrated by James Phillips' deft account of Buchanan's relationship with members of the so-called Sidney circle, surviving correspondence gives us a good, if incomplete, picture of how men such as Gabriel Harvey, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Randolph, Daniel Rogers, Philip Sidney, and Edmund Spenser corresponded with or wrote about Buchanan, his character, and his literary works, including him in their consultations concerning political matters of the day, and asking after his new works.[22] Buchanan's other biblical play, *Jephthes*, had first been published in Paris in 1554, and was praised by Gabriel Harvey.[23] How *Baptistes* was received by his English readership is less clear from the correspondence that survives. Harvey includes a reference to the *Baptistes* in a marginal note next to Erasmus' 'Epistle to Hecuba', which, for all its obscurity, serves to demonstrate he had the play in mind, and to suggest that he held Erasmus and Buchanan in equal regard.[24] Sidney lauded both of Buchanan's 'Tragidies' in his *Defence of Poesy*, noting how they 'do justly bring forth a divine admiration'.[25] Thomas Lodge enlisted Buchanan in his defence of theatre, *A Reply to Stephen Gosson* (1579).[26] And Stephen Gosson, in his riposte to Lodge, *Playes Confuted in Five Actions* (1582), picking up on his reference to Buchanan, saw in his 'play of *John Baptist*' an example of how 'to avoyde that which is evill, and yet keepe that which is good, according to the true use of Poetrie', although stipulating that it was 'to be reade, not to be played'.[27] The *Baptistes*, then, had a part to play in the lively literary discourse of the day, and as such, the drama may have come to Watson's attention, as the younger man set out to translate *Antigone.*

The fact that Buchanan dedicated the *Baptistes* in 1576 to his pupil, the young James VI, will have further drawn the attention of the Sidney circle, hopeful as they were for the future king to have inculcated at an early age the principles they so admired in Buchanan himself.[28] Similarities have been noted in terms of theme and content between *Baptistes* and Buchanan's most famous political treatise, *De Iure Regno apud Scotos*, published in 1579, and it is possible that this work encouraged further demand for his dramatic treatment of the dangers of tyranny.[29] This would certainly explain the 'extraordinary number of early editions and issues'[30] the *Baptistes* went through, in Britain and mainland Europe. Thomas Vautrollier produced a second edition in 1578, and further editions were produced in Edinburgh, Louvain, and Frankfurt that same year. In 1579 a further two editions were produced, in Frankfurt and Strasbourg. A compilation of his 'divine' works - his *Psalms*, *Jephthes,* and *Baptistes* - went on to be published in London in 1592, around the same time as a slew of editions printed in Geneva (1590, 1591, 1593, and 1594).[31]

Some kind of contact, at whatever level of consciousness, between *Baptistes* and *Antigone* is more likely than not. Buchanan's play may have been just one contributing factor among several that shaped Watson's vision of Antigone. The potential that we can glimpse when we set these two texts side by side, however, is a useful provocation when thinking about how Greek drama was disseminated in early modern England. Even allowing for both plays to have existed without any conscious allusion or emulation on Watson's part, placing these two texts in proximity allows us to consider phenomena that go beyond direct influence. The existence of both of these highly esteemed texts, and their similar visions of the figure of Antigone, work together to strengthen this particular anti-Antigone strand of interpretation for any and all readers who came into contact with both texts. Readers might find themselves summoning the ghosts of Malchus and Gamaliel as they contemplate the opening scene of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Antigone's scene of farewell could draw a comparison, and a negative

one at that, with the superior eschatological vision of John the Baptist. Haemon's impassioned disagreement with his father might carry with it associations of the biblical Puella and her self-interested views on the purpose of tyranny and, perhaps also, a strengthened warning about the dangerous power of love in corrupting and overturning the stability of the state. Both circulating in the intellectual and literary worlds of early modern England at the end of the sixteenth century, Buchanan's *Baptistes* and Watson's *Antigone* create a mutually reinforced and negative vision of the figure of Antigone.

When we conceive of the relationships between different genres of drama in different languages as rhizomatic (as opposed to being bound by linear or chronological connections of 'influence'), the phenomenon of iteration becomes crucial. The more a pattern of action is presented, the more likely it is to be seen and shared in other texts. Buchanan's adaptation of parts of Sophocles' *Antigone* in his biblical drama *Baptistes* provides one further iteration of certain patterns of action, characterizations, and patterns of interaction between those characters. Such a text provides further opportunities to think on and think with a Greek tragic text, underpinning and supporting a hypothesis of wider, subterranean dissemination of Greek tragedy across Latin and vernacular drama in early modern England.

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[1] See e.g. Claire Kenward, 'The Reception of Greek Drama in Early Modern England', in *A Handbook to the Reception of Greek Drama,* edited by Betine van Zyl Smit (Chichester, 2016), pp. 173-98, and Tania Demetriou and Tanya Pollard, 'Homer and Greek Tragedy in Early Modern England's Theatres: An Introduction', *Classical Receptions Journal*, 9 (2017), 1-35.

[2] See, recently, Robert S. Miola, 'Representing Orestes' Revenge', *Classical Receptions Journal*, 9 (2017), 144-65, and Tanya Pollard, *Greek Tragic Women on Shakespearean Stages* (Oxford, 2017).

[3] See Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*: *The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor, 2003).

[4] George Buchanan*, Tragedies*, edited by P. Sharratt and P. G. Walsh (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 18; James H. McGregor, 'The Sense of Tragedy in George Buchanan's *Jephthes*', *Humanistica Lovaniensia,* 31 (1982), 120-40.

[5] In the dedication to James VI, written for the play's publication in 1577, Buchanan describes the work as 'although prematurely born, nevertheless my first offspring'; see *A Critical Edition of George Buchanan's Baptistes and of Its Anonymous Seventeenth-Century Translation Tyrannicall-Government Anatomized*, edited by Steven Berkowitz (New York, 1992), pp. 350-1. See also Buchanan's *Vita* in James M. Aitken, *The Trial of George Buchanan before the Lisbon Inquisition* (London, 1939), p. xx.

[6] Berkowitz (pp. 203-46) acknowledges the influence of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* on *Baptistes*, focusing on the shared fate of Agamemnon and Herod as 'victims of an oath' (p. 214), but the presence of Sophocles' *Antigone* in *Baptistes* is of a greater magnitude than this.

[7] Joachim Camerarius, *Commentarii Interpretationum Argumenti Thebaidos fabularum Sophoclis* (Hagenau, 1534), fol. 67^{r}.

[8] See Micha Lazarus, 'Tragedy at Wittenberg: Sophocles in Reformation Europe', forthcoming in *RQ*, 73 (2020).

[9] Robert S. Miola, 'Early Modern Antigones: Receptions, Refractions, Replays', *Classical Receptions Journal,* 6 (2014), 221-44 (p. 223).

[10] Miola, 'Early Modern Antigones', p. 237.

[11] All quotations of Watson's Latin, and English translations of his work, are from *Antigone (1581)*, in *Thomas Watson, The Complete Works*, edited by Dana F. Sutton (2010; rev. Irvine, CA, 2019), http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/watson/. Line numbers are given in-text. In this edition, the Pomps and Themes are presented separately from the play in a single text, with line numbers running 1-426.

[12] See Lazarus (forthcoming).

[13] The Latin text of *Baptistes*, and translations, are quoted from Sharratt and Walsh's edition of Buchanan's tragedies (n. 4). The Greek text of *Antigone*, and translations, are quoted from Sophocles, *Antigone, The Women of Trachis, Philoctetes, Oedipus at Colonus*, translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones (Cambridge, MA, 1994).

[14] A further use of 'carcer' is used with a different meaning in line 1065. Berkowitz (n. 5), p. 538 notes the repeated use of *carcer* here is most likely a tribute to an epigram (no. 102, 'In Huius Vitae Vanitatem') of Thomas More's, which not only shares the sentiment of the Baptist's speech, but uses this particular word no fewer than eight times in ten lines.

[15] Berkowitz notes of Buchanan that 'the other neo-Latin plays … present only hypocritical priests', p. 163.

[16] See Cathy Shrank, '"This Fatal Medea," "this Clytemnestra": Reading and the Detection of Mary Queen of Scots', *Huntington Library Quarterly,* 73 (2010), 523-41.

[17] Sutton (n.11), 'Introduction', http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/watson/antigone/intro.html, ¶ 17.

[18] See I. D. McFarlane, *Buchanan* (London, 1981), pp. 385-90.

[19] See Albert Chatterley, 'Thomas Watson (1555/6-1592)', *ODNB.*

[20] Those of Thomas Naogeorgus (see Sutton (n. 11), ¶ 3, 22) and Joachim Camerarius (see Miola, 'Early Modern Antigones' (n. 9), p. 236) are explicitly noted by Watson in the side notes he provides to his own text.

[21] Roger Ascham recounts in *The Scholemaster* (London, 1570) how he considered Buchanan's *Jephthes*, first published in 1554 in Paris, as one of two plays 'that ever I saw' that could 'abyde the trew touch of Aristotle's preceptes and *Euripides* examples'. See *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, edited by Gregory G. Smith, 2 vols (Oxford, 1904), I, 24. The sentiment was echoed by Francis Meres: see Smith, II, 322.

[22] See James E. Phillips, 'George Buchanan and the Sidney Circle', *Huntington Library Quarterly,* 12 (1948), 23-55. Thomas Randolph, writing to Buchanan from London on March 15, 1579, tells him 'Your *De Regno* is greatlye desyered amonge us'. See *Georgii Buchanani ... opera omnia*, edited by Thomas Ruddiman and Pieter Burman, 2 vols (Leiden, 1725) II, 746.

[23] *The Works of Gabriel Harvey*, edited by Alexander B Grosart, 3 vols (1884-5; reprinted New York, 1966), I, 218.

[24] Berkowitz (n. 5), p. 215.

[25] Smith, I, 201.

[26] Smith, I, 68.

[27] See Arthur Kinney, *Markets of Bawdrie: The Dramatic Criticism of Stephen Gosson* (Salzburg, 1974), p. 178.

[28] Phillips (n. 22), pp. 36-9

[29] See Berkowitz (n. 5), pp. 110-11.

[30] McFarlane (n. 18), p. 386.

[31] See Berkowitz, pp. 7-24.